



## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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### Introduction

12-27-2004

**Safety, permanency and well-being** - Every child is entitled to a safe, secure and permanent home and a child who must be placed outside of his home in temporary care should remain in that placement for as short a time as possible. Any placement that continues beyond one year is no longer considered temporary and may not continue as the plan except in very exceptional circumstances. In order to prevent placement or assure that a child in placement moves quickly into a permanent home, CP&P requires a system of permanency planning in every LO.

**Relative and family friend preference** - The Division always considers relatives and family friends as the **first resource** for a child who needs placement. See [CP&P-IV-D-1-100](#).

### DEFINITION OF PERMANENCY PLANNING

12-22-2008

**Permanency planning services are the specific, systematic actions taken toward ensuring a permanent home for each child.** The systematic nature of CP&P permanency services provides a consistent structure for purposeful decision-making and monitors time frames within which plans are made and goals are achieved. It ensures that case planning is regularly reviewed in order to avoid inappropriate planning and delays in processing.

**Every child under the supervision of CP&P receives permanency services,** including children in temporary placement with relatives, family friends, foster care, and residential treatment facilities.

**Permanency planning begins as soon as the Division determines that services will be provided** -- When a child enters placement, the Worker immediately begins to plan concurrently (simultaneously) for reunification and for an alternative permanency plan, such as adoption. See [CP&P-III-B-2-200](#), Commitment to Permanency.

## PERMANENCY PLAN ASSESSMENT AND CASE GOAL SELECTION

9-29-2006

**Permanency assessment consists of** all of those activities and services directed toward selecting the case goal(s), and developing a permanent plan appropriate to the needs of the particular child. See [CP&P-III-B-4-400](#), Case Goals. Concurrent permanency planning starts at the very first moment of placement. When the primary goal is reunification, the Worker is required to select a secondary case goal. While the Worker makes diligent efforts to achieve reunification, he or she begins simultaneously to develop a back-up plan in the event that permanency with the removal family cannot be achieved within the legally prescribed timeframes. See [CP&P-III-B-3-300](#), Concurrent Permanency Planning.

Activities which can aid in selecting the goals and developing a plan include, but are not limited to:

- Visits between the Worker and the child's parent(s) directed toward engaging the family in determining the permanent plan
- Visits between the Worker and the child directed toward determining the permanent plan with the engagement of the child, if age appropriate
- Identification of each parent and search for any missing parents
- Identification of relatives (both maternal and paternal) and family friends who may be willing and able to assist the family
- Visits between the child, his parent(s), siblings, and other relatives, scheduled on a regular basis and documented in the case record
- Preparation of the CP&P Form [26-81](#), Family Summary/Case Plan, or the CP&P Form [26-53c](#), Individual and Family Assessment Outline - Adoption

### Worker

**Determine the case goal(s) and permanent plan with the parent(s)**, after consultation with your immediate Supervisor.

**When the primary goal is reunification** -- Select a secondary goal as well, and begin immediate concurrent permanency planning toward both reunification and an alternate permanent plan for the child. **Adoption is the first choice for a**

**secondary case goal, as it provides the child with the highest level of legal and emotional security.**

**Search for missing parents.** See [CP&P-III-B-2-100](#). When available and appropriate, information is obtained from other agencies or individuals, using the CP&P Form [26-15](#), Authorization for Release of Information.

**Involve the child in the process and carefully consider his or her views,** when he or she is able to understand the implications of permanency planning.

**Involve the resource parent(s), relative(s), or family friend caregiver(s),** in keeping with the partnership philosophy, to the extent that the plan will affect his or her care of the child or planning for his or her own family's future, and to the degree that the length and nature of his or her relationship with the child may affect the planning.

**The most appropriate permanent plan is not always obvious** and involves considerable evaluation. In determining the permanent plan for the child, consider a variety of factors that affect the child and his situation. When necessary, obtain reports and recommendations from involved professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and school personnel.

**Permanency planning requires continued assessment and possible modification of the case plan** throughout the child's temporary placement. In determining a permanent plan, consider the factors listed in II A 804, Individual, Family and Community Assessment and Planning, along with the following factors:

- The age of the child
- The length of time the child has been in placement
- The frequency and nature of contacts between the child and the parent(s), the child and his or her siblings, and the child and his or her other relatives (maternal or paternal)
- The services provided to assist the parent(s) and the outcome of those services
- The parent's ability to meet the child's basic needs, and to provide a home

which ensures the child's health and safety

- Progress made by the parent(s) toward stated goals
- The focus of the child's sense of belonging and identity
- Special needs of the child
- Other permanent resources, such as relatives, family friends, foster or adoptive parents
- The child's preference
- The degree of commitment the parent(s) and the resource parent(s), relative(s) or family friend(s) have to the child
- The child's legal status with CP&P and the feasibility of legally freeing the child for adoption

### **Processing the Permanent Plan**

**3-17-2003**

This stage includes all activities which are directed toward achieving the permanent plan. After the goal has been selected and the permanent plan has been developed, the Worker identifies the short term objectives to be accomplished.

The Worker identifies and provides those activities listed below and any other activities which are necessary to achieve the permanent plan:

- Coordinating contacts between the child, the child's parent and the foster parent, relative caregiver or family friend caregiver specifically directed toward achieving the plan; see [CP&P-III-C-3-200](#), Supervision and Contacts During Placement;
- Establishing a visitation plan between the child and his parents and his siblings and other relatives;
- Initiating identity work through a Life Book;
- Searching for a missing parent;

- Developing a case plan with the parent, see [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#);
- Facilitating a review at least every six months by the court or by administrative review to include participation by the parents and the out-of-home placement provider or relative caregiver and evaluating certain criteria as described in [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#);
- Facilitating a permanency hearing held by the court to obtain approval of a permanency plan within 12 months of the date the child is placed and at least once every 12 months thereafter while the child is in placement or within 30 days after a judicial determination that reasonable efforts to reunify are not required, see [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#) and [CP&P-IV-A-3-100](#);
- Exploring adoption with the foster parent, relative or family friend caregiver;
- Obtaining surrenders;
- Obtaining legal clearance or guardianship;
- Arranging the case transfer conference;
- Preparing the child for the achievement of the permanent plan;
- Recruiting (if necessary), identifying and selecting the adoptive home;
- Processing CP&P approval for an adoption; and
- Remedying problems in an adoption home placement.

See [CP&P-IV-C-1-100](#), Adoption Generally, for principles related to adoption.

The permanent plan and the objectives are documented in the case record.

## **Placement of the Child in the Permanent Home**

**12-27-2004**

This stage is the actual placement of the child in the permanent home or CP&P approval of the child's present placement as a permanent home.

The child is considered placed in the permanent home when he is:

- Returned home;
- Placed in a selected adoptive home;
- Freed for adoption while in a preadoptive home;
- In an adoptive status in a preadoptive foster home and consents are signed by the LO Manager;
- Placed permanently with a relative or family friend (such as kinship legal guardianship or relative with custody); or
- In a permanent independent living arrangement or in a permanent long-term specialized care setting.

### **Permanent Plan Achieved Successfully**

**12-27-2004**

The permanent plan is successfully achieved when:

- The child is returned home and no additional permanency services are required;
- The child is returned to the other parent;
- The adoption is finalized;
- The kinship legal guardianship of the child is obtained;
- The child is placed with a relative or family friend who is not interested in pursuing adoption or kinship legal guardianship but will obtain legal custody of the child, and no additional permanency services are required;
- The child functions independently of Division intervention and no further permanency services are required;
- The child is placed in long-term specialized care.

In most cases when the permanent plan is achieved, terminate supervision to enable the child and family to function independently of Division intervention, supervision or direct services. There are exceptions, such as subsidized adoption and kinship legal guardianship.

### **Locating a Missing Parent**

**5-9-2011**

When the whereabouts of the child's parent or parents is unknown, every effort is made to locate him in order to involve him in the permanency planning for the child.

A thorough search is initiated. In addition to procedures in [CP&P-III-C-4-100](#) and [CP&P-IV-C-1-600](#), apply to the Parent Locator Service (PLS) if the child is in a

placement paid for by CP&P. Federal regulations permit the Parent Locator Service to assist in the location of an absent parent of a child who is not a WFNJ TANF recipient if the information regarding the parent's whereabouts will be used to: establish paternity, enforce an order for child support or enforce a current support obligation. See below regarding the Parent Locator Service.

### **Parent Locator Service**

**3-17-2003**

The Parent Locator Services (P.L.S.) in the Division of Family Development Child Support Unit has access to numerous sources of information. In order for them to begin a search, they need certain pieces of information. If P.L.S. is provided a date of birth, they can access the Division of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Corrections. If P.L.S. is provided with the last known employer, they request the social security number. If the social security number is available, then the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, Wage Reporting and New Jersey Payroll are accessed. Additionally, the Federal Parent Locator Service, which includes the Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Veterans Administration, National Payroll Records Center and Department of Defense, is accessed.

The Social Security Administration may also be accessed with the names (including the mother's maiden name) of the subject's parents. If the last known address is provided, the United States Postal Service may be accessed.

Do not send parent locator requests directly to the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS). Send all locator requests to the State Parent Locator Service (SPLS). Use the appropriate forms created by the Division for this purpose, CP&P Form [16-72](#), Non-WFNJ-TANF Application, and CP&P Form [16-73](#), Location Services Request, or by written request under Division letterhead.

Every state has a Parent Locator Service. If there is reason to believe that a missing parent is in another state, note this on CP&P Form [16-73](#), Location Services Request. New Jersey P.L.S. will access the other state's system.

### **Procedures When Parent Is Located**

**3-9-2015**

Whenever a parent is located, the Worker discusses the child's placement and involves the parent in permanency planning. The Worker informs the parent of his responsibility to support and follows the support procedures in [CP&P-IX-F-1-225](#).

### **Inmate Locator Services**

**12-22-2000**

Whenever a parent is known to be incarcerated but the prison/jail where his or

her time is being served is unknown, use one of the following inmate locator services or contact the prison/jail as described below.

- For inmates in the **Federal prison system**, call the Federal Bureau of Prison's (BOP) inmate locator number at (202) 307-3126.
- For inmates in the **State prison system** under the jurisdiction of the **New Jersey Department of Corrections**, call the inmate locator service at (609) 777-5753.
- For inmates in a **state prison system outside New Jersey**, contact the corrections agency in the appropriate state. See [CP&P-III-C-4-200](#), Out-of State Corrections Agencies, for a telephone listing of each state's corrections agency.
- For inmates in a **county/local jail**, contact the appropriate sheriff's office.

Callers using any of these services should be prepared to identify themselves; state the purpose of the call; and provide the inmate's name, date of birth and Social Security number. The Federal prison system and New Jersey's State prison system will accept a verbal request for information over the phone. A written request may be necessary if an out-of-state prison system or county/local jail does not accept a verbal request.

### **Case Planning with the Parent, Child or Caregiver**

**3-17-2003**

CP&P has a firm commitment to facilitate the parent's, child's and caregiver's understanding of the placement process and of their role in regard to the permanent plan. The written case plan is one method through which CP&P and the parent can define their mutual responsibilities and expectations in preparing the child for placement, developing a permanent plan, and working toward stated goals. See [CP&P-III-C-6-100](#), [CP&P-IV-A-3-200](#) and CP&P Form [26-81](#). When the permanent plan is return home, the case plan or service agreement specifically stipulates the changes that must occur or conditions that must exist in order for the child to be returned.

In some instances, the case plan may be developed with a foster or adoptive parent or child.